

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Canceled)
2. (Currently amended) **A wraparound article carrier for packaging an article, the carton comprising opposed top and base walls interconnected by opposed side walls thereby forming a tubular structure, wherein an aperture is provided in the base wall to accommodate a portion of the article, wherein a bracing tab is formed at least in part from the base wall to define the aperture and folded so as to form a spacer for causing the top and base walls to be spaced by a predetermined distance, and** ~~An article carrier as claimed in claim 1,~~ wherein the bracing tab is formed in part from one of said side walls and hingedly connected to said one **of said** side walls.
3. (Currently amended) An article carrier as claimed in claim 2, wherein said one side wall comprises a securing flap and a side panel **secured to the securing flap in face contacting relationship**, said securing flap being hingedly connected to the base wall along a first fold line and extending toward the top wall to a free edge of the securing flap, said side panel being connected to the top wall and secured to said securing flap, said bracing tab being formed in part from said securing flap and hingedly connected to the securing flap along a second fold line.
4. (Original) An article carrier as claimed in claim 3, wherein the distance between said free edge of the securing flap and said second fold line is less than the distance between said free edge and said first fold line.
5. (Currently amended) An article carrier as claimed claim 4 **2**, wherein the bracing tab extends to the top wall or a portion of the article disposed adjacent to the top wall.
6. (Canceled)

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently amended) A blank as claimed in claim 7 ~~9~~, wherein the bracing tab is sized so as to extend to the top wall panel or to a portion of the article adjacent to the top wall panel in a set up condition.

9. (Currently amended) A blank for forming a wraparound carrier for packaging an article, the blank comprising a base wall panel, a first side wall panel, a top wall panel and a second side wall panel hingedly connected together in series for forming a tubular structure, and an aperture provided in the base wall panel to accommodate a portion of the article, wherein a bracing tab is formed at least in part from the base wall panel to define the aperture and so folded in a set up condition to form a spacer for causing the top and base wall panels to be spaced by a predetermined distance, the blank further comprising a securing flap hingedly connected to the base wall panel along a first fold line, wherein the bracing tab is formed in part from said securing flap and hingedly connected to the securing flap along a second fold line, ~~A blank as claimed in claim 7,~~ wherein the distance between a free edge of the securing flap and said second fold line is less than the distance between said free edge and said first fold line.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled) A wraparound article carrier for packaging an article, the carton comprising opposed top and base walls interconnected by first and second side walls so as to form a tubular structure, and an aperture provided in the base wall so as to receive a protruding portion of the article, wherein the aperture extends into a panel adjacent the base wall so as to facilitate the folding of the base wall panel over the protruding portion during construction of the carton, ~~An article carrier as claimed in claim 10,~~ wherein the panel adjacent the base wall is a securing flap arranged hingedly connected to the base wall, said securing panel being secured to one of said first and second side walls in face contacting

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relationship to secure the base wall to the one of said first ~~or~~and second side walls.

12. (Currently amended) A article carrier as claimed in claim 11, wherein the securing flap is disposed on the inside surface of the one of said side walls so that a portion of the aperture in the securing flap is covered by the one of said side walls.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)